



South Mountain Corridor Study

Citizens Advisory Team
Meeting Summary

Date: December 13, 2007
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: South Mountain Community College

CAT Members Attending:

Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee
Scott Mittelsteadt, Sierra Club
Eric Baim, Silverado Ranch HOA
Chad Blostone, The Foothills HOA
Al Brown, Az Public Health Association
Tamela Daniels, South Mountain Village Planning Committee
Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Derrick Denis, Foothills Reserve HOA
Jim McDonald, City of Avondale
Michael Norton, Laveen Village Planning Committee
Nathaniel Percharo, Pecos Road/I-10 Landowners Association
Laurie Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
John Rodriguez, Lakewood HOA
Brian Smith, Calabrea HOA
Timothy Stone, Bougainvillea HOA
Carola Tamarkin, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Terry Tatterfield, Kyrene Elementary School District
Diane Krecker, Mountain Park Ranch HOA

CAT Members Absent:

Camilo Acosta, Arlington HOA
Gila River Indian Community – District 4
Lisa Bray, South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce
Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
David Lafferty, City of Tolleson
Dave Olney, Valley Forward
Jack Sellers, East Valley Partnership
Dave Williams, Arizona Trucking Association

Staff and Consultants

Timothy Tait, ADOT
Michael Bruder, ADOT
Mark Hollowell, ADOT
Velvet Li, ADOT
Bill Vachon, FHWA
Bob Hazlett, MAG

Amy Edwards, HDR
Heather Honsberger, HDR
Mike Book, HDR
Ben Spargo, HDR
Dean Howard, PDG
Joy Butler, PDG
Fred Erickson, KCA
Tom Keller, KCA

Citizens:

Jim Jochim
Doug Murphy
Alice Wells
John Roberts
James Garnand
Wayne Nelson, Jr.
Robbie Sherwood
Jay Patel
Jim Cavanaugh
Colleen Sparks
Sasha Saliego
Bruce Lincoln
Adam Lincoln
Francisco Rodriguez

Meeting Agenda	Speaker
Gila River Indian Community – Right of Entry	Timothy Tait, ADOT
CAT Role and Responsibilities	Tom Keller, KCA
CAT Meeting Schedule and Topics	Timothy Tait, ADOT
Projected commercial vehicles	Bob Hazlett, ADOT
Traffic Studies	Amy Edwards, HDR Ben Spargo, HDR

Meeting began at 6:10 p.m.

Tom Keller: Before we begin, I would like to welcome a couple of visitors to tonight's meeting. We have Jim Cavanaugh the Mayor of Goodyear in attendance. We also have Robbie Sherwood representing Congressman Harry Mitchell's office. Are there any other introductions?

CAT Member: Some of you may know that Clayton Moss was on this committee until about a year ago. I found out that this morning he was driving his truck with his brother when he had a seizure. He is currently in the hospital where he is being evaluated. They believe that he may have a brain tumor so they are doing a full-body scan. Last I had heard, he was becoming more responsive.

Tom Keller: We have a quorum this evening. Do any of the members have questions or comments since our last meeting? If you have any questions or comments related to the meeting agenda they should be withheld until we discuss each particular item tonight.

No comments

Tom Keller: The next agenda item is the role and responsibilities of the CAT. It has been a couple of meetings since we have reviewed the CAT's Operating Agreement. In fact, the last time that we reviewed this was before our newest members were here. What is on the screen is directly from the Operating Agreement. The South Mountain Citizen's Advisory Team will provide a forum for communication between the Arizona Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and the local community regarding the proposed South Mountain Freeway. The SMCAT is a voluntary advisory team and not a decision-making body, and it will not be responsible for decisions made by the State of Arizona or the Federal Highway Administration. The SMCAT will meet regularly to review project status and provide input on issues that are relevant to the project.

The meeting protocol is as follows. First, we have welcome and introductions followed by recognizing if we have a quorum. Then we present the meeting agenda, review the timekeeping process, and remind everyone about the standards for behavior notification. Next, is discussion and debate; recommend process is reviewed, the meeting visitors are welcomed, and we discuss any issues that the members may have that are not on the meeting agenda. Lastly, we let the attendees know when they should expect to have a break.

It is important to remind everyone that originally the South Mountain CAT set behavior standards that should govern the meetings. CAT members are expected to treat each other with mutual courtesy, respect, and dignity. Since the CAT is a voluntary advisory team, it is important that individual CAT members abide by accepted standards of behavior. Any unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will be grounds for exclusion from further participation in CAT activities. Finally, any CAT member who acts disrespectfully toward other members, disrupts the CAT process, or is unable to attend meetings on a consistent basis may be required by the third party facilitator, the ADOT public involvement team, or a majority of the other CAT members to leave or resign from the CAT.

Does everyone have a copy of the agenda in their packet?

Joy Butler: The agenda is the gold colored piece of paper.

Tom Keller: From this point on in the agenda, Tim Tait will be discussing the Gila River Indian Community. Following his presentation, we will be hearing from Bob Hazlett and then Amy Edwards and Ben Spargo. We also have created a list of topics that shows what we will be discussing in upcoming meetings from now until May.

Timothy Tait: If I talk loud enough, can I get away with not using a microphone?

Affirmative response

Timothy Tait: Before I talk about the Gila River Indian Community's right-of-entry permit, I want to talk about the CAT's rules and responsibilities. It has almost been a year since we began

meeting again. A year ago, I made a promise to you. Does anyone remember what that promise was?

No response

Timothy Tait: The promise was that this CAT would only be meeting for one year. At that time, some of you believed me. A year later, we have made some progress, but the Draft Environmental Impact Statement has still not been released for public review. We expected it to be released in November of 2007. Today I honestly don't know when it will be out on the street. I can assure you that we have been making progress with the document.

I hope that no one is getting progress fatigue. For those of you who are new to the CAT, you are probably just getting your bearings. I must admit, it is getting a little long in the tooth. Because of this, I wanted to remind you that this group can make decisions. Let me reiterate the CAT objective—to make a build or no-build recommendation. The recommendation you make will be based on the best information we can give you. The CAT can make this recommendation at any point in this process. So if you feel that you are ready to make the recommendation, let us know. We are not here to change anyone's mind. Another option is that the group could consider making a preliminary recommendation and then dismissing until the Draft EIS is available for public review. Anyway, if you feel you are ready then you tell us that. We want to respect your time and opinions and apply your recommended choice when ready. Are there questions or comments? One factor in me presenting this to you is because I can't tell you when the document will be released to the public. Will it be released in 2008 or 2009? It is too hard to tell at this time.

CAT Member: Do we get to know the issue with the delay?

Timothy Tait: The problem is with the definition concerning traditional cultural properties. Defining exactly what it means is part of the challenge. I am sure all of you can respect the delicate nature of this issue. We are working through this topic before we send the document to FHWA's Legal Sufficiency Division.

CAT Member: Who is working on this issue, FHWA or ADOT?

Timothy Tait: All groups are working on this issue: GRIC, ADOT, FHWA, and others. That's why I have mentioned that the schedule is hazy. When this project started, the Draft EIS was supposed to be well done by now.

Are there any other questions?

CAT Member: Since lawyers always base things on prior cases, are there cases where federal projects have been constructed through mountains before?

Timothy Tait: I don't think I am qualified to answer that question. As I mentioned, there are other issues involved such as the traditional cultural properties.

Any other questions?

CAT Member: Do we have to alter the schedule because of the Gila River Indian Community right-of-entry and additional environmental studies?

Timothy Tait: That was a perfect segue.

Tom Keller: Before you begin, we have several people sitting in on the CAT who are filling in for the regulars. Derrick Denis is representing the Foothills Reserve HOA, Diane Krecker is representing the Mountain Park Ranch HOA, and Scott Mittelsteadt is here representing the Sierra Club.

Public Comment: I am from the Gila River Indian Community. When you mention traditional cultural properties, are you talking about properties that are registered or all the properties within the corridor? Some of these properties have been significantly destroyed.

Timothy Tait: The study team will be evaluating any site that has cultural significance.

Bill Vachon: I don't think any of the properties being evaluated are registered.

Tom Keller: I must mention that if any members of the public have questions, please write them down on the public comment cards. Joy has these cards that you can complete and read at the end of tonight's meeting.

CAT Member: It sounds to me like the issue is not with the definition of traditional cultural properties but how that definition applies to the area.

Timothy Tait: Yes. The issue is applying the definition to the study area.

CAT Member: Awhile ago, I remember the team said that they were working on the definition. It makes sense that now it is being localized.

Timothy Tait: Are there any other questions?

No response

Timothy Tait: You may have heard some information recently about the Gila River Indian Community giving ADOT a one-year right-of-entry permit to study information related to the South Mountain Freeway on community land. Some of these news reports have been correct and others misleading. What this development does not mean is that there will be an evaluation for another eastern alternative. What this permit does allow is for ADOT to conduct field analysis in connection with the Pecos Road alignment. Much of this fieldwork would be dealing with possible enhancements to the potential freeway. This is not as big of a development as some of the media reports have alluded. Are there any questions about the right-of-entry program?

CAT Member: Does this mean that you can do work on the reservation, such as surveys?

Timothy Tait: Yes, that is correct. We can do investigations for a 12-month period. But the GRIC was very clear that it wasn't changing its decision about not constructing the freeway on tribal land.

CAT Member: Is there a possibility that this stance could change in the future?

Timothy Tait: I cannot speculate. The GRIC continues to reiterate that they aren't entertaining alignment options south of Pecos Road.

CAT Member: Does this one-year timeframe affect the schedule?

Timothy Tait: No, this survey work will not require the full 12 months and will not impact the schedule.

CAT Member: What if during these additional surveys, something new is learned that would require more study?

Timothy Tait: If something significant is discovered it would most likely require more study and time for evaluation.

CAT Member: Given the area's hydrology, the substantiated flows could be greater than what had been thought. Most likely, the flows don't stop at Pecos Road—they flow south on the GRIC. This would be great to document. Has there been any discussion of transference of right-of-way from their land? Would additional right-of-way be needed?

Timothy Tait: Maintaining hydrological flows from the mountain is an issue addressed in the Draft EIS. It will also be an issue that is addressed in the field through the GRIC's recent right-of-entry permit that was issued to ADOT.

CAT Member: I don't think we have had any opportunities to discuss the issue of hydrologic flows and the recorded data. We really haven't been told anything about drainage. If we don't have authority to handle flows, what is done?

Amy Edwards: As currently written, the Draft EIS assumes that the amount of drainage on the GRIC is maintained. As part of the proposed South Mountain Freeway, drainage would be contained north of Pecos Road. The right-of-way studies have taken this into account in the impacts analysis report.

Timothy Tait: Are there any other questions?

CAT Member: Can you describe the fieldwork for this study? What are the differences between the studies that were performed north of Pecos Road as opposed to south of the road?

Timothy Tait: The studies south of Pecos Road will involve survey work and determining utility work locations.

CAT Member: Do you anticipate finding any new results?

Timothy Tait: There could be new information that we discover for the area south of Pecos Road.

CAT Member: Are there any utilities on the GRIC?

Timothy Tait: The point of the surveys is to determine the things that we may not know that exist on the GRIC.

CAT Member: In previous meetings, it has been said that commercial and industrial development on the GRIC may affect the freeway design. There has not been much information

given to us on this issue. Will surveys that originate from the right-of-entry permit give us more information regarding the GRIC's development plans?

Timothy Tait: No. Development plans are separate from the surveying that will be done.

CAT Member: Will air quality and noise be addressed in these additional surveys?

Timothy Tait: I don't know how much additional work may be done. For instance, there would probably not be any additional noise studies done since there are no receptors south of Pecos Road. The right-of-entry permit wouldn't address a new study for analysis of air quality. The studies would more or less be concerned with what is in and on the ground. The study team would also be looking at enhancement opportunities and identifying potential community impacts. The results of any studies done will be included in the Draft EIS.

CAT Member: Would existing detention basins be able to absorb additional drainage from this proposed freeway?

Amy Edwards: Drainage would be collected by a combination of existing and proposed detention basins. We can talk later about the details, but it is certain that new facilities would be required.

CAT Member: So you would be using some existing facilities?

Amy Edwards: Yes. However, all of the detention basins would be within the right-of-way, as proposed in the Draft EIS.

Timothy Tait: Any final questions?

No response

Timothy Tait: Let's move on. We have developed a schedule on the dates of the next CAT meetings and the topics that will be discussed at each meeting. This was developed from your input in the last CAT meeting, which was prior to the October bus tour. We received a great amount of input about the items that you would like to talk about. The next CAT meeting will be on January 17 where we will be discussing the eastern alignment in some detail. We will also be discussing the design and effect and profile options along Pecos Road. For those of you not familiar with the terminology, profile options describe whether the freeway would be constructed above, below, or at ground level. That is what we are planning to present in January.

CAT Member: Why will you be identifying the alternative? I thought this was already done.

Timothy Tait: We will be identifying some of the issues regarding the alternative, such as the open cuts.

CAT Member: Why will we be having a discussion about this issue when it has already been decided?

Timothy Tait: We will be presenting the options that were evaluated as a part of the Draft EIS. If the CAT members feel they understand the issue and don't wish to discuss it, we can discuss other topics.

CAT Member: What do you mean by if the CAT members feel they understand the issue?

Timothy Tait: We don't want to hold meetings just to hold them. We would like to present information that the CAT would like to discuss.

CAT Member: Why would we want to participate if you have made up your mind already?

CAT Member: We understand what you are saying, but we aren't done with you yet.

CAT Member: If you aren't open to our suggestions then why have this group?

Timothy Tait: If you wanted to have input on the development of the Draft EIS then this group should have met 10 years ago.

CAT Member: That is a fatalistic point of view. We could walk out the door right now.

Timothy Tait: We don't want to see that happen. We want these meetings to have value for you.

CAT Member: How are you going to determine when we have made up our mind about the build or no-build recommendation?

Timothy Tait: You will have to decide this among yourselves, and work with Tom and Fred.

Tom Keller: Your role is not to make your recommendation as an individual, but to make your recommendation based on the group that you are representing. You each should be having conversations with these groups as far as when you feel ready to make your recommendation. If the CAT feels they are ready to make that recommendation then we can take the vote. I would imagine that many of you still need to have more conversations with the groups you are representing. If you think that a particular topic that is scheduled on an upcoming meeting agenda has already been discussed then it doesn't have to be part of the agenda.

CAT Member: We haven't had a full discussion of any of the topics. How seriously have these topics been discussed internally? How realistic were these discussions when you made a decision over a year and a half ago?

Timothy Tait: Let me clarify something. We may have incorporated elements into the Draft EIS, but nothing will be final until we have a Final EIS. When we have a Final EIS, what is contained in the document will be final. Until we get to that point, items in the document can be changed.

CAT Member: That is a good point. Is our input being submitted as part of the Draft EIS?

Timothy Tait: No, we are not submitting your input on a line by line basis. However, your comments have been influencing the Draft EIS.

CAT Member: The CAT recommended that the potential freeway be aligned in the West Valley at the Loop 101. Will this be documented in the Draft EIS?

Timothy Tait: Yes. There is an entire chapter that discusses public involvement and the CAT's recommended alternative for the Western Section.

CAT Member: Since the Draft EIS isn't completed, would it behoove us to make this decision now rather than later?

Timothy Tait: That's why if you made a recommendation now, it would be preliminary until after the document is released.

CAT Member: As a newbie, I don't have a sense of how the group is feeling about this potential freeway. So I am not sure if we could make a preliminary recommendation at this time. I am not sure if people want this freeway above ground or below ground. I really haven't heard what people are looking for. How does the group feel? Can we have a Draft EIS summary so we can know what is going into the report? Where does this group stand?

Timothy Tait: You can give us detailed input on the proposed freeway, such as the roadway profile, but we are not looking for that right now. Your final recommendation is whether the proposed freeway should be constructed.

CAT Member: Can we get information regarding the freeway profile being considered?

Timothy Tait: Please wait on these types of questions until after I get through this section.

CAT Member: Can you identify the differing roles between ADOT and MAG? It seems that MAG just writes the check to fund this proposed freeway. Does MAG have input on the study?

Timothy Tait: MAG is at the front end and the back end of the process as far as the funding is concerned. ADOT also works with MAG throughout the process to get their study input.

CAT Member: Is there anyone representing MAG with whom you are discussing this study besides Bob Hazlett?

Timothy Tait: Yes, there are others with MAG with whom we are actively working on this study.

Tom Keller: Let's stick to the agenda and continue discussing future meeting topics. We can follow up on the other issues.

CAT Member: So ADOT can override any decisions that MAG may make?

Timothy Tait: Ultimately it is ADOT's responsibility to construct and maintain the freeway.

CAT Member: I have been reading a few newspaper articles about the costs of this proposed freeway. First I saw that the estimated cost was \$1.2 billion, then it was \$1.5 billion, and now I have seen the cost estimated at \$1.7 billion. Which figure is accurate? Is this based on today's dollars?

Timothy Tait: The current estimated cost is \$1.7 billion.

CAT Member: So the cost increased a half a billion dollars in one year?

CAT Member: Is this because of the real estate costs?

Timothy Tait: This estimated cost includes everything, including right-of-way acquisition.

CAT Member: So the current cost is \$1.7 billion. Should we expect a cost increase of a half a billion dollars each year?

Timothy Tait: No, I wouldn't assume that.

CAT Member: I am thinking about the increases in the costs of raw materials.

Timothy Tait: Construction costs are a topic on the meeting schedule several months from now. In the February meeting, we will discuss jurisdictional waters, water resources, and floodplains. In March, we will be talking about visual resources, land use, and biological resources.

CAT Member: It doesn't bother me, but isn't Thursday, March 20 a holiday?

Timothy Tait: We will check.

In April, the discussion will focus on hazardous materials, energy, geotechnical, and utilities. What's energy?

Amy Edwards: This would be a discussion on the energy for running a freeway facility.

Timothy Tait: I am learning like you are.

In May, we will discuss social conditions, environmental justice, and noise.

At this point, we stopped designating the meeting dates, but we have listed other meeting topics. These would be such issues such as Section 4(f) and 6(f)— public parks and land water conservation.

CAT Member: So by this point, you would have your legal definition of traditional cultural properties?

Timothy Tait: That is our hope.

The next issues we would be discussing are economics; prime and unique farmlands; cumulative and secondary impacts; public comment summary; and construction, right-of-way and total costs.

CAT Member: Because of the cultural issue pushing the studies out, do you have any idea when people will see concrete being poured?

Timothy Tait: Should a build alternative be selected, I believe that construction could begin in 2011.

CAT Member: When would construction be completed?

Timothy Tait: It is estimated that construction would be completed in 2016. This potential project would contain 22 miles of new freeway, which would be one of ADOT's largest single projects.

CAT Member: Are all of the South Mountain Freeway studies in the Draft EIS?

Timothy Tait: Yes. For many of these studies, the technical reports are currently on the study Web site. The summaries aren't terribly long; some are as short as two pages.

CAT Member: I have looked at some of these reports. They tend to just report the existing conditions.

Timothy Tait: Yes, that is correct.

CAT Member: What about the detailed reports? Where can we access them?

Timothy Tait: In some cases, CAT meeting presentations will include more detailed information. All of the detailed information will be available in the Draft EIS when it becomes available for public review.

CAT Member: I don't think we can terminate this group until we discuss some of the more important issues. For me, a big issue is air quality.

Timothy Tait: We are planning on holding two meetings to discuss the air quality issue. The first meeting would be shortly before the Draft EIS is released and the other meeting would be immediately after it is released. So after the Draft EIS is released, the first thing we will do is have a panel to discuss these issues specific to this proposed freeway.

CAT Member: Can you share with us the thought process on having the two meetings?

Timothy Tait: Before the Draft EIS is released, we can discuss air quality and freeways in general terms. After the Draft EIS is released, we can use the data in the draft to discuss specifics to the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

CAT Member: This discussion would last the whole meeting?

Timothy Tait: Yes, but we could scale that back if the group feels that a whole-meeting discussion is not necessary.

CAT Member: I only would like to know the results of the air quality study. Having two meetings for this seems redundant.

CAT Member: So we won't know how far apart these meetings could be—one or two months?

Timothy Tait: Ideally it would be one month apart. We will have to cross that bridge when we get to it.

Let me wrap this up. After the air quality panel, we would have a meeting just to discuss the air quality results in the Draft EIS. At that point, if the group chooses, the CAT meetings will be fast and furious. We know that the public review of the Draft EIS will have at least a 45-day comment period. We can't give you a copy of the Draft EIS in advance, so we will need to meet during this window of time. The final CAT meeting will be a recommendation. That is the road map moving forward.

Are there any comments or questions?

Fred Erickson: Any questions can be addressed in the question and answer session.

Tom Keller: Let's take a 10-minute break.

Break

Tom Keller: Next on tonight's agenda will be Bob Hazlett talking about projected traffic followed by Amy Edwards and Ben Spargo.

Bob Hazlett: My name is Bob Hazlett and I am with the Maricopa Association of Governments. Chad (Blostone) had asked me at the last meeting to develop some more information regarding area traffic. I have included a strip map of area facilities in your packets. Thank you Chad for your remarks because you opened up my eyes that I did not address the traffic issues in enough detail.

I was asked by some CAT members at the break about commercial traffic and if I could give them context on how it affects the rest of the freeway system. It is important to note that the proposed South Mountain Freeway is viewed as a commuter freeway. There will be commercial traffic, but it really will have more commuter than truck traffic. I have heard the comments that some members of the public think this will be a truck bypass. This is not the case. MAG is forecasting that the South Mountain Freeway will have 190,000 cars a day by 2030. I did some research on this issue. First, I had to ask the question if the Valley currently has a freeway that carries a truck-traffic percentage of 60 percent. Even the most heavily traveled truck-traffic route—the New Jersey Turnpike—only has about 45,000 trucks-per day. The New Jersey Turnpike area is also heavily developed and in an industrial corridor. So to think that the South Mountain Freeway will have a truck-traffic percentage of 60-70 percent is far fetched. This freeway will have the same traffic characteristics as other Valley freeways, such as Interstate 10 and Interstate 17.

This map shows the primary state highways in Arizona. It shows the percentage of truck traffic on each of these freeways. Note that the red areas dominate the state roadways, which reflect 25 percent truck-traffic levels. Interstate 40 carries 20,000–30,000 cars per day and roughly 10,000–15,000 trucks per day. On Interstate 10, most areas show a 25 percent truck-traffic percentage. Most of these trucks are coming from or going to California locations. As you look closer at this freeway, you start to see the truck-traffic percentage go down as you approach Phoenix. This is primarily due to the increased commuter-traffic levels.

CAT Member: That looks like solution by dilution.

Bob Hazlett: You are trying to put words in my mouth.

Again, we are talking that Interstate 10 in the short stack and the Deck Park Tunnel has the highest traffic volume: approximately 303,000 cars and 30,000 trucks per day. As you look at the urban areas, the truck-traffic percentages go down. This is because these roadways have higher commuter volumes.

You have just received a map with recent data that MAG has done. It contains 2007 data, based on traffic counts between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Look at the truck-traffic percentages along Superstition Freeway. You see the truck-traffic percentage die off as you go east because you start encountering a high amount of residential neighborhoods. Interstate 10 has a fairly healthy truck-traffic percentage moving toward the commercial areas. Notice that the truck-traffic percentages are higher around Sky Harbor Airport, for example. This is because much of the cargo transportation begins and ends there

One of the things I found quite interesting is that much of the truck traffic is coming to Phoenix from Los Angeles. This traffic tends to deadhead in the central Phoenix area, where then it is transported by smaller trucks throughout the metropolitan area.

We put together a strip map that shows you the projected traffic counts segment by segment for the proposed South Mountain Freeway. This shows the projected total east and westbound traffic levels and commercial vehicle projections, or CMV by 2030. I didn't show truck volumes on the surface streets, but I did list the truck percentages that you see on the other major Valley freeways. I also listed the ramp traffic counts so you have an idea where freeway traffic exits. There is going to be a fair amount of traffic on this potential freeway. It is estimated that this potential freeway would have a daily volume of 190,000 vehicles per day by 2030. Currently, the Pima Freeway carries 180,000 vehicles per day. What this diagrams is the best estimates, using current data to show what should be expected on the proposed South Mountain Freeway in the future. In any case, based on the best available data, this proposed freeway would have truck percentages similar to the other Valley freeways.

Are there any questions?

CAT Member: You don't have any numbers for 51st Avenue/Beltline Road. This is an industrial area currently used by large trucks. So you are putting a freeway right where these guys want it. I have noticed that one out of every four vehicles is a tractor trailer with their noisy Jake brakes.

Bob Hazlett: I don't want to dispute your numbers but because of area truck restrictions, I would like to take a look at the data MAG has recorded.

CAT Member: If you don't believe me, I will sit with you on the corner so we can count the truck traffic.

Bob Hazlett: I would love to do that.

CAT Member: The City of Phoenix would love to get Terminal 2 back causing more traffic. Also those numbers need to go up on Williams Field Road due to the expansion of the Williams Gateway Airport.

Bob Hazlett: If the City chooses to do that, we will pull that into the traffic model. Also, it hasn't been determined if Williams Gateway Airport will become a major airport. It is only speculation right now.

CAT Member: So then later you would tear up the freeway and widen it?

Bob Hazlett: Land use plans change. The other point is that all we can use is the best data available at this time. This is data that is given to MAG by the cities of Phoenix and Mesa. If the land-use planning changes, we will change the traffic model.

CAT Member: I have problems with the MAG model. It ignores the Gila River Indian Community. I think the conclusion you are reaching is way off and chances are the GRIC will be coming online with this the same time the freeway is coming online. The GRIC is looking at developing 11,000 acres of land south of this potential freeway for industrial purposes. Once the airport is in place, it becomes a natural distribution point. What we are planning on building is a freeway that is going to be overrun with cars and much more truck traffic than you are thinking. It is a natural course for cars to find local routes when the freeways are full of truck traffic. I asked at the last CAT meeting that we have representatives from the GRIC to come here tonight. Without their planning information included in the traffic model, it is scary to think that we have developed traffic projects without this data.

Bob Hazlett: You term this issue as an excuse, but I have to term it as a reality. The GRIC gives us their planning data that they wish to give us for their future land use. MAG cannot speculate about actions they may be doing. By the way, the GRIC is a member of MAG. However should they choose to make changes to their plans, they will need to give us this information for us to make the change. They are a sovereign nation and can do what they want. To guess is irresponsible and we could be held liable. I cannot stress more that we have to take the information that is given to us. But as it stands, the GRIC has been frugal about the information that they have given us, that is their culture and we have to respect it.

CAT Member: That is why I am saying that the traffic modeling is flawed.

Timothy Tait: I must mention that the GRIC was invited to attend this CAT meeting. They formally declined.

CAT Member: We know that the GRIC will be developing another casino with a six-lane roadway leading to a large parking lot. Has this been figured into the traffic modeling?

Bob Hazlett: Yes, to the best of my knowledge. We have used the data that the GRIC has given us—we can't change the numbers.

CAT Member: The development of this casino is a recent decision so the data they have given you may not include this information.

Bob Hazlett: That is entirely possible. The land use information was given to us a few months back.

CAT Member: Let's assume the CANAMEX Corridor is completed after this proposed South Mountain Freeway. Isn't this a natural route for Mexican truck traffic to use?

Bob Hazlett: That is pure speculation. The CANAMEX Corridor in the Phoenix metropolitan area has been defined as being located in the West Valley.

CAT Member: Tim, do you have any thoughts on that?

Timothy Tait: The CANAMEX Corridor is designated as Interstate 8 to State Route 85. This will function as the bypass for Downtown Phoenix. The proposed South Mountain Freeway won't help trucks avoiding downtown.

CAT Member: But State Route 85 doesn't meet the CANAMEX Corridor's requirements.

Timothy Tait: There is funding in place to upgrade the facility.

Tom Keller: Let's move on to the final topic. Amy Edwards and Ben Spargo will discuss traffic studies.

Ben Spargo: Amy and I will continue the traffic discussion. I will begin with Traffic 101. All of the agencies and consultants have certain things in common, such as how traffic is measured. ADOT, the County, and all of the cities go out and do traffic counts on an annual basis. These counts are usually available on the agencies Web sites. MAG has been the steward of all the information regarding 2030 traffic.

Traffic can be measured as a daily volume. At that level, it is a rule of thumb that what happens each day can be compared between two roadways. That leads to the discussion of traffic level of service or LOS. As we have mentioned tonight, MAG uses traffic model data to forecast the future traffic conditions. What they do is develop more of a broad look at what is projected to happen on the major arterials and freeways.

Congestion is described as when the traffic levels are higher causing the LOS to not be very good. When the LOS is higher, there tends to be traffic delays to the point where traffic may be stop and go. This would be the lowest level of service. LOS is a grading system to measure freeway efficiency. The grading system was developed based on traffic speeds and the amount of traffic delay. A situation with little to no traffic on a freeway would be LOS A or B. As the density of traffic becomes higher, the LOS gets worse. This image depicts the different LOS levels. At LOS A, you see a great amount of space between all of the vehicles. If you look at the worst LOS, Level F, you see that you would be in a stop and go situation where traffic is bumper to bumper.

The next graphic shows the existing LOS along the regional freeways. Here is an existing look at the regional freeway system and the LOS on the different freeways. Generally, the peak traffic periods are 6–9 a.m. and 4–6 p.m. I am sure you all have had personal experience with traffic congestion. In the West Valley from Interstate 17 to Loop 101 is heavy moving east in the morning and moving west in the afternoon.

The next two slides show morning versus afternoon traffic on the regional freeway system with and without the construction of the proposed South Mountain Freeway. One of the big changes between the two is that the LOS has increased in the evening. One of the things to consider about this difference is about the duration of travel. The duration appears to be shorter with the proposed South Mountain Freeway in place, although the LOS is still at levels E and F.

Amy Edwards: So without the South Mountain Freeway, you may have two or three hours of LOS E and F traffic. But with the freeway, this time is decreased.

CAT Member: Do you have a way to show that in your studies?

Ben Spargo: Yes, we included this information when we looked at Interstate 10 operation.

Amy Edwards: We provided some travel time information as a part of the traffic studies.

CAT Member: All I see is five to six miles of Interstate 10 that has the LOS E and F levels. So you basically want to spend \$2 billion to save five or six miles of congestion?

Amy Edwards: Without the proposed freeway, you have LOS F. With the proposed South Mountain Freeway, it may be for a much shorter period of time but in these particular areas shown on this map, it may be much shorter than without the freeway. We would be decreasing the LOS E and F duration during peak times.

CAT Member: Upon looking at the two diagrams, with and without the proposed freeway, there is not that much of a difference. You still have LOS E and F.

Amy Edwards: We are going to talk specifics about the proposed South Mountain Freeway in a minute. Please hold that thought.

Ben Spargo: On the LOS 2030 evening slide, one thing to notice is along Interstate 10 in the West Valley. You see you have inbound and outbound traffic congestion at LOS E and F. If you look at the aggregate delay and speeds, the length of that is much shorter with the build alternatives.

Amy Edwards: Moving on, you have this graphic in your handout. This shows the 2005 traffic conditions. The top half of the graphic shows the freeway conditions and the bottom half shows arterial street conditions. At the top, you see the different segments of the Valley freeways and the corresponding traffic volumes. In the arterial street section, you also see the volumes associated with the various locations. The reason for showing freeway and arterial volumes on the same graphic is because freeways are designed to carry much more traffic than the arterial streets. The arterial streets are designed to carry much less traffic at a lower rate of speed.

Here is a closer view of the existing traffic conditions on Valley freeways. Notice the traffic volumes on Interstate 10. Another interesting freeway to notice is Loop 202 in the East Valley. The volume on this freeway appears to be significantly less but this freeway segment was designed to accommodate future traffic levels. So right now, this segment is an under-performing section that is not carrying as much traffic volume for which it was designed.

The next slide shows a closer view of the current conditions on the arterial streets. We highlighted a few of the major streets and their traffic volumes. You have copies of these slides in your CAT notebooks.

CAT Member: I live near Chandler Boulevard. Where did you get the average daily traffic figures that 61,000 vehicles travel in the area from 48th Street to Interstate 10?

Ben Spargo: These figures came from the City of Phoenix Web site, the 2006 City of Phoenix traffic study.

CAT Member: I won't argue with this number, but you can't tell me that it is currently operating at LOS E or F.

Ben Spargo: Based on the data, it is operating at a LOS E or F.

CAT Member: What was the LOS at 48th Street and Chandler Boulevard before Pecos Road was constructed?

Amy Edwards: We will need to capture your question in the meeting notes and respond to it later.

Tom Keller: Please ask your questions in a manner that is appropriate.

Amy Edwards: There are currently 70,000 vehicles on Pecos Road. We then take this information one step forward. You may wonder what the traffic conditions are projected to be in the future.

The next slide shows the projected traffic volumes in 2030 with and without the proposed freeway. One item the study team is interested in is the average daily traffic or ADT reduction percentage, which determines how much the traffic volume would be decreased if the freeway were built.

Here are the rest of the freeway conditions, with and without the proposed freeway system. This includes the Interstate 10 improvements. In some cases you see very little change, but in other areas, there are big differences.

Finally, let's take a closer look at the arterial streets. These are the same streets that we showed you earlier when we discussed the existing conditions. Should this proposed freeway be constructed, one example of substantial average daily traffic reduction would be on 51st Avenue between Baseline and Dobbins roads. Having the South Mountain Freeway in operation would reduce the ADT by 22 percent.

CAT Member: I am a little confused. How can we look 20 years into the future and see what traffic volumes will be?

Amy Edwards: MAG has given presentations on this to you in the past. They look at census data, land use, and modeling to determine the 2030 traffic projections.

Ben Spargo: Unfortunately, our MAG representative has left.

CAT Member: This isn't a funny matter.

Amy Edwards: No one thinks this is funny. We can ask MAG to come back to make sure all of your questions regarding this issue are answered.

CAT Member: When you talk about a reduction in ADT, for example a 10-percent reduction looks to be more than 26,000 cars. Is this 13,000 each way or 26,000 each way? I am not impressed by percentages.

Amy Edwards: The number would be the reduction in ADT for both directions.

CAT Member: I only mention this because you are succinct about the number of vehicles eastbound versus westbound. I just want to make sure that everyone understands.

Ben Spargo: On these examples we have shown, we are picking out a few locations, but you have to evaluate the aggregate of the whole length.

CAT Member: All I really care about is what is happening around the Broadway curve. I want to make sure that what you are telling us is understood.

Amy Edwards: We are looking at the movement of regional traffic. There are a number of other factors that go into that, it's all part of our purpose and need.

Timothy Tait: The proposed South Mountain Freeway is not *the* solution and no one here will tell you it is. There is no one solution for freeway problems. For this discussion, we have evaluated traffic volumes in 2030. ADOT is also considering what traffic conditions may be in 2050. There are other elements involved—some that ADOT has control over and some that others have.

CAT Member: What percentage of the traffic in the E1 Alternative will originate or terminate at 55th Avenue and Interstate 10?

Amy Edwards: Off the top of my head, I can't say. This is addressed in the Draft EIS. We can get this information and come back to you. Unless you are adjacent to the freeway, you would see a reduction of traffic volumes on the arterial streets. You would also see travel time savings. People are moving faster so there would be less delay and any associated costs.

Timothy Tait: I believe that roughly 9 percent would be pass-through traffic.

CAT Member: With only having nine percent pass-through traffic, all the other cars would be polluting and causing air quality issues in the area. If it causes me to drive on local streets, my trips will take longer. So when you do your studies, have you confirmed that pass through traffic is nine percent?

Amy Edwards: Please don't throw the nine percent around. I would have to check on the number. In the future if the proposed freeway is not built, the resulting air quality issues will also be available in the Draft EIS.

CAT Member: Almost everything you are discussing is based upon the MAG traffic model. Is there any other agency or group that has a traffic model that can be used as a comparison? Does Arizona State University have one?

Amy Edwards: The MAG traffic model is the industry standard. It is vetted, validated, and accepted by the industry.

Tom Keller: We have come to the final agenda item. If any member of the public has a question, we ask that you write it down and then either read your question to us or I can read the question.

Members of the CAT have a two-sided evaluation form. Please make sure to complete both sides. There are a total of seven questions.

Public Question: On the right-of-entry GRIC field analysis, how wide is the right-of-entry south and north of Pecos Road?

Amy Edwards: The right-of-entry would be the study area limits.

Public Question: Regarding the cultural property issue on and off the GRIC, is the final decision made by HDR or a state agency?

Timothy Tait: The final decision will be made by the GRIC, ADOT, and the National Register of Historic Places.

Public Question: Since nearly 90 percent of the homes in the Goldman Ranch subdivision will be destroyed if the proposed South Mountain Freeway is built on Pecos Road—the largest percentage of any of the HOA’s that abuts Pecos Road—why did ADOT fail to include them in the reconvened Citizens Advisory Team?

CAT Member: Where is Goldman Ranch?

Public Response: It is located in the area from Liberty Lane to Pecos Road to 26th Street near Desert Vista High School.

Timothy Tait: When we reconvened the CAT, one of our first issues was CAT membership. We asked the CAT if there were any groups that they felt were missing and needed to be added. At that point, several groups were added. We are positive that we missed some of the groups, since it is virtually impossible to add all of them, but anyone is welcome to attend these meetings.

Public Question: Since ADOT has purchased a number of homes and vacant lots near Pecos Road does that mean it is a foregone conclusion that ADOT has already decided that Pecos Road is the route for the South Mountain Freeway? If the answer is no then why is ADOT still continuing to buy lots and homes?

Timothy Tait: No, if a decision is made to not construct this freeway then ADOT can dispose of any property that has been purchased.

Public Question: Would it save taxpayer’s money if the proposed South Mountain Freeway was built on GRIC land versus Pecos Road?

Timothy Tait: ADOT can’t speculate about the costs associated with something that hasn’t been studied.

Public Question: At the CAT Meeting on October 4, 2007, a motion to invite Victor Mendez to address the CAT was passed by a motion of 13 to 2. When is he scheduled to appear?

Timothy Tait: He did receive the information that the CAT would like him to appear at one of these meetings, but he is currently not scheduled to appear.

Public Question: At the October 4, 2007, CAT Meeting, Mark Hollowell answered a question from a CAT member as follows: “The purpose of this CAT is to make recommendations for the Eastern Section of this proposed freeway-whether the freeway should be constructed on the Pecos Road alignment or if it should be a no-build situation. After the Draft EIS has been released for public review, the recommendation from the CAT and substantive public comments will be evaluated and will be considered in the Final EIS.” What is the definition of “substantive public comments” as it sounds very subjective to me?

Mark Hollowell: We respond to all comments.

Public Question: Since the Draft EIS will be released while the CAT is in session, how is the “No-Action Alternative” being addressed in the Draft EIS that is currently under administrative review? What impact, if any, will the CAT recommendation of “build” or “no-build” have on the Final EIS?

Timothy Tait: The no-action alternative will be given equal analysis in the Draft EIS. The CAT recommendation to build or not build the proposed South Mountain Freeway will be considered and documented in the Final EIS.

Public Question: The Draft EIS for the Red Mountain Freeway (Loop 202) which was issued in December 1997 contained 250 pages, yet the section on the No-Action Alternative was less than a third of a page. Should the public expect the same superficial coverage in the proposed South Mountain Freeway Draft EIS that is currently under administrative review by various agencies?

Timothy Tait: The no-action alternative will be given equal analysis in the Draft EIS. I wasn’t involved in the process so I cannot speak for the analysis that was done as part of the Draft EIS for the Red Mountain Freeway.

Public Written Question: The South Mountain Freeway is an important plan, but where is the widening of the Broadway Curve plan and the completion of the Interstate 8 widening between I-10 and I-8 Buckeye to Gila Bend?

ADOT Response: As ADOT reviewed with the CAT during our recent bus tour, there is currently a study evaluating comprehensive improvements to Interstate 10 through the Broadway Curve area. These potential improvements are being studied from Loop 202 to State Route 51 and may include construction of additional lanes to accommodate present and future traffic demand. More information on this corridor improvement study is available on ADOT’s Web site at (http://www.azdot.gov/highways/Valley_Freeways/I10/Maricopa/improvement_study.asp); there is also a simulation video on the Web site which illustrates the potential local-express lane concept being studied for this stretch of I-10.

Likewise, there are extensive improvements taking place on State Route 85 from Gila Bend to Buckeye (I-8 to I-10) in the far West Valley. This corridor serves as a vital link in the “Phoenix Bypass”—an ADOT effort to move pass-through traffic off of I-10 in metro Phoenix onto the less congested I-8 to link back up with I-10 in Casa Grande. Construction is ongoing to convert State Route 85 into a four-lane divided highway.

Tom Keller: Before we adjourn, note that the next meeting is scheduled for January 17. The topics for that meeting are on the list in your packet.

Are there any other comments?

CAT Member: There was a statement about the relativity of time for LOS. There is a sheet in the very back of this packet in which you didn’t spend any time explaining. It shows information about the traffic time reduction.

Amy Edwards: Because the question is there, I would propose that we discuss this at a future meeting.

CAT Member: There are a couple more things that should be involved. Without water wells there is no ability to recoup the expense in the right-of-way. I would like to know whether they could be moved. What about the scraping or blasting of the mountains in the area? These seem to significant impacts to people in the area. These issues should be addressed in the Draft EIS.

Amy Edwards: These issues are addressed in the Draft EIS.

CAT Member: Those specific questions?

Amy Edwards: Yes.

CAT Member: What about information about a specific well that feeds a golf course?

Amy Edwards: We will look at the information and get back to you. I want to clarify whether we should make a recommendation.

Timothy Tait: Happy Holidays!

Tom Keller: Is there a motion for adjournment?

Motion for adjournment

Tom Keller: Second?

Motion seconded

Tom Keller: All in favor?

Motion carries

Tom Keller: We are adjourned.

Meeting ended at 8:37 p.m.